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September 28, 1977

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TO: The Deputy Secretary
 FROM: Richard N. Cooper

Human Rights in Argentina

Argentine Finance Minister Martinez de Hoz called on me for bilateral discussions yesterday. Human rights was one of several issues stressed by the Minister. Martinez de Hoz described a markedly improved situation in Argentina, noting a decrease in activity by both terrorists and vigilante groups. He said that the alleviated crisis atmosphere was making it possible for the government to exercise firmer control and reinstitute due process. He admitted that incidents still occurred -- but that the government was trying to keep its own forces under strict control and, in fact, Videla had announced that members of the security forces acting outside the law would be treated as if they were terrorists committing illegal acts.

Minister Martinez de Hoz raised the issue of upcoming IDB loans. He pointed out that there were several loans which required action before the end of the IDB fiscal year on December 31. He said that he would provide information to us to document the improved human rights situation and that he hoped in light of this improved record we could support the loans. He specifically spoke of the potable water loan where he felt that a combination of the needy criterion, along with the improved human rights situation, ought to make positive action in the near future possible.

cc: ARA
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